

## Lessons Learned and Strategic Operationalisation of Peacebuilding and Sustaining Peace in Niger

Consultation for the 2025 Peacebuilding Architecture Review  
17 December 2024 | Niamey, Niger

*The national consultation held on 17 December 2024 brought together 71 participants, including youth, civil society actors, government representatives, UN agencies, and national and international NGOs, to collaboratively identify Niger's specific peacebuilding priorities and needs. Using [the Peace Games methodology](#), grounded in [GPPAC's network approach](#), participants engaged in an inclusive and co-creative process to define strategic priority areas for peacebuilding action. The consultation identified five key risks to sustaining peace in Niger, along with corresponding preliminary recommendations to address them. The findings from this consultation highlight the importance of localisation, long-term flexible financing for peacebuilding, and the ability of the UN to fulfil its primary functions of providing convening space, technical support and political accompaniment to national stakeholders. This summary note could be a guiding resource for the national government and actors working within Niger to develop a strategy for sustaining peace in the country.*

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Sustaining peace for young people in Niger means strengthening the ability of all peacebuilding stakeholders to address the following risks, including by considering an action on respective recommendations:

### **Risk 1: Poor governance, including corruption and exclusion:**

While the term 'good governance' may not be explicitly stated, the principles encompassed within it—such as accountability, transparency, inclusivity, and the rule of law—are integral to the capacity of the national government to exercise its primary responsibility for peacebuilding and sustaining peace ([A/RES/70/262-S/RES/2282](#), PP8; [A/RES/75/201-S/RES/2558](#), OP3). In Niger, poor governance is a central risk to sustaining peace. Corruption in the key sectors is one of the most difficult challenges, alongside limited inclusion of the key interest groups. Poor governance has a negative impact on the access to human rights and basic social services such as education, security, the environment and infrastructure. It further leads to social dissolution, radicalisation and persistent fragility.

The national government should consider:

- **Strengthening accountability:** The government should request each ministry to develop specific performance indicators to track progress in their respective sectors and ensure accountability. Such indicators must include the partnership with civil society in a safe and systematic manner. This would ensure that the ministries not only engage with civil society, but also that the initiatives and policies they adopt are in line with the needs of local communities and maximise their impact at the local level. The assessment of ministries' performance on these indicators needs to be regular and transparent/publicly available.
- **Strengthening mechanisms for reporting corruption:** The government should establish safe mechanisms for reporting corruption and create an incentive system for whistleblowers.
- **Involving youth in decision-making:** The government should allocate a quota for elected and appointed positions in all sectors. Currently, [women quotas are present in Niger](#); however, it is

not specific to each ministry. Similar quota system should be adapted to support the participation of young people and need to be applied in every ministry.

- **Implementing the Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) Agenda:** The government, in partnership with civil society and development partners, should develop a national action plan on the YPS agenda.

The UN field presences should consider:

- **Strengthening government's capacity for good governance:** First, the UN Country Team (UNCT) should raise awareness among political leaders about the importance and added value of good governance. Second, the UNCT should provide technical assistance to the government in strengthening the capacities of local and national government to ensure accountability, transparency and inclusion, promoting judicial independence, and advancing effective law enforcement.
- **Harmonising national laws and global policies:** The Resident Coordinator (RC)'s Office, with the support of the UNCT and UN Headquarters, should develop monitoring mechanisms to provide assessment of the implementation of global policies, including the commitments to YPS, disarmament, Women, Peace and Security, among others. Such monitoring mechanisms would support the identification of gaps in existing national laws and policies, as well as their implementation.
- **Advocating for the youth involvement in decision-making:** First, the UNCT should constructively engage with the government to outline the benefits of youth engagement in matters of national concern. Second, the UNCT should create platforms for the safe and meaningful engagement of diverse youth in decision-making processes at the national and local levels.

The donor community should consider:

- **Making resources available to promote good governance:** The donor community should make funding available for diverse local actors, including young people, whose projects aim to strengthen democratic institutions (i.e., promote transparency in public fund management).
- **Enhancing quality financing:** The donor community should simplify the processes for accessing funding by local actors, prioritising long-term funding and making financial support more flexible, in line with [the principles of quality financing](#).
- **Supporting local peacebuilding initiatives and peacebuilding networks:** The success of existing local initiatives proves the need to increase funding directly to local civil society, including their networks to ensure the possibility to scale up good practices and promote innovation. Local peacebuilding networks are of particular value as they facilitate capacity- and confidence-building, broaden constituencies committed to peace and allow for coordination of various local activities.

Other peacebuilding stakeholders should consider:

- *Local civil society* should raise community awareness about laws and rights using clear and simple resources in local languages
- *The private sector* should integrate peacebuilding activities into all private sector programs, including funding initiatives.

## **Risk 2: Insecurity, including armed conflicts, terrorism, and kidnapping:**

Terrorism, violent extremism and the activities by organised groups undoubtedly undermine communities' opportunities to build and sustain peace ([A/70/674](#), para 1). Niger, being located at the heart of the Sahel region, faces persistent insecurity due to attacks by armed groups, inter-community

tensions, terrorism and other forms of violence. Recent political instability has weakened government institutions, limiting their ability to manage these crises. Further, schools and social services become unavailable during conflict and violence, limiting people's access to basic rights and creating fragility.

The national government should consider:

- **Strengthening civil-military cooperation activities:** The government should establish specialised units within the military focused on civil-military interactions. Further, the government could implement comprehensive policies that define the roles and responsibilities of military and civilian actors and facilitate coordinated efforts.
- **Supporting academic integration of children,** including those displaced by conflicts: The government should implement physical protection measures to safeguard educational infrastructure, ensure safe routes to schools and guarantee that schools are weapon-free.

The UN field presences should consider:

- **Scaling up Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR) programs:** The UN should provide financial and technical support for DDR programs, ensuring adequate monitoring and adaptation as required.
- **Promoting regional cooperation:** The convening power of the UN should be utilised to facilitate multi-stakeholder dialogues on peace and security in the Sahel, with concrete strategies to prevent cross-border conflicts in the Sahel.
- **Reinforcing preventive diplomacy:** UN field presences can act as neutral facilitators, bringing conflicting parties together to negotiate and resolve disputes peacefully. Establishing and maintaining relationships with local governments, civil society, and community leaders allows field missions to understand the root causes of tensions and open channels for dialogue.
- **Committing to the principles of the UN Charter:** The UN field presences should focus on providing technical support, convening capacity and political accompaniment, avoiding interference in Niger's internal issues.

The donor community should consider:

- **Making resources available to prevent/counter terrorism:** Donors should increase financial support for national inclusive initiatives in the fight against terrorism.
- **Making resources available for prevention and peacebuilding:** Donors should increase support for locally-led conflict prevention mechanisms, peacebuilding projects and local infrastructures for peace, including the expansion of early warning systems at the community level (i.e., [SCAP-RU](#)) and capacity-building programs on conflict management.
- **Enhancing quality financing:** As discussed in the previous section, the donor community should simplify the processes for accessing funding by local actors, prioritising long-term funding and making financial support more flexible, in line with [the principles of quality financing](#).
- **Promoting localisation:** The donor funding priorities need to be guided by the needs within communities, rather than political priorities of the donor countries. [Authentic partnerships](#) between the donors and diverse national stakeholders can help balance interests. The co-creation with local communities is an essential part of impactful and relevant action.

Other peacebuilding stakeholders should consider:

- *All stakeholders* should expand the participation in community dialogues by involving key actors, including religious and traditional leaders.
- *International actors* should carefully reflect on the humanitarian impact of sanctions and its connection to further social dissolution and fragility. For example, the imposition of sanctions by the UN on Niger in 2023 has a negative impact on the rights and freedoms of the people.

### Risk 3: Impacts of Climate Change, including pollution, deforestation, wildfires:

It is globally recognised that peace and security risks are ‘exacerbated by the challenges of climate change’ ([A/RES/77/104](#), Annex, PP3) and that climate change is one of the ‘compounded risks’, along with armed conflict, natural disasters, violence ([E/RES/2022/10](#), PP5). Climate change in Niger, including pollution, deforestation and forest fires, is exacerbating the degradation of natural resources, creating tensions over access. Deforestation and forest fires destroy livelihoods and agricultural land, while pollution affects public health, weakening social cohesion and complicating peace efforts. This context is further complicated due to the internal and external displacement of the population as a result of insecurity and exploitation of natural resources by mining and oil companies.

The national government should consider:

- **Adopting a comprehensive national climate policy:** The government should advance the use of renewable energy, promote sustainable agricultural practices, provide tax credit for clean energy technologies, address exploitation of natural resources by foreign corporations, among others. All climate policies should be conflict-sensitive.

The UN should consider:

- **Providing technical support for national climate policies:** The UNCT should provide guidance to the government in the development of comprehensive national climate policies. This includes the encouragement to move away from the use of fossil fuels, particularly coal.
- **Ensuring accountability for the private sector engaged in resource exploitation:** Global policies on [Business and Human Rights](#) should become legally binding and provide a resource to protect the land and the people of Niger from resource exploitation.

The donor community should consider:

- **Making resources available for climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience-building:** Donors should develop investment plans that support for climate action. This could include the provision of grants for green energy technologies, renewable energy, and sustainable agricultural and pastoral techniques to preserve water and land.
- **Enhancing quality financing:** As discussed in the previous sections, the donor community should simplify the processes for accessing funding by local actors, prioritising long-term funding and making financial support more flexible, in line with [the principles of quality financing](#).

Other peacebuilding stakeholders should consider:

- *Local civil society* should raise community awareness about the impacts of climate change, existing laws and policies, as well as promote opportunities for the engagement of local actors in advocacy. Practically, local civil society could also foster green entrepreneurship within communities and promote climate-sensitive agricultural techniques, among other good practices in mitigation and adaptation.

### Risk 4: Poverty and unemployment:

Sustainable development and peace are mutually reinforcing ([A/RES/70/262-S/RES/2282](#), PP4; [A/RES/75/201-S/RES/2558](#), PP3); therefore, the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), including on poverty (SDG1), have a direct impact on the possibilities for sustaining peace. Niger faces widespread poverty and high unemployment, which are major challenges for peacebuilding. [Over 40% of the population lives below the poverty line](#), and economic opportunities remain limited, particularly for young people and women. This situation exacerbates social tensions, fuels recruitment by armed groups, and limits communities' ability to promote conflict prevention and peacebuilding



initiatives. In addition, the absence of a market-driven education system and a lack of support for entrepreneurship hampers job creation, exacerbating instability.

The national government should consider:

- **Strengthening professional training:** The government should reform the education system to align professional training with market needs, focusing on technological skills.
- **Encouraging entrepreneurship:** The government should reduce fiscal and administrative barriers to business creation.

The UN field presences should consider:

- **Supporting government efforts to address unemployment:** The UN field presences should provide technical and financial assistance to the implementation of national policies and programming that promote youth and women entrepreneurship and income-generation activities.
- **Engaging young people in peace and security action:** The practices by the UNCT to hire interns from national actors has proven to be a successful practice to support capacity-building for policy and programmatic engagement in peacebuilding and sustaining peace.

The donor community should consider:

- **Promoting localisation:** As discussed above, the donor funding priorities need to be guided by the needs within communities, rather than political priorities of the donor countries. [Authentic partnerships](#) between the donors and diverse national stakeholders can help balance interests. The co-creation with local communities is an essential part of impactful and relevant action.
- **Making resources available for addressing unemployment:** Donors should support local initiatives that promote the creation of sustainable jobs and other economic empowerment projects, as well as professional integration programs and practical empowerment programs.

Other peacebuilding stakeholders should consider:

- *Civil society* should raise awareness among youth about the risks and opportunities related to career choices and entrepreneurship.
- *International non-governmental organisations (INGOs)* should assist local partners to establish mentorship programmes, including those using intergenerational approaches.
- *All peacebuilding stakeholders* should promote equal opportunities in recruitment, including national government, civil society, private and public sectors, and international organisations.

### **Risk 5: Weakened civil society:**

Strong civil society can play an important role in advancing efforts to sustain peace ([A/RES/70/262-S/RES/2282](#), PP10). In addition to rapidly shrinking civic space and limitation on the freedom of expression, the lack of financial and technical resources for local civil society in Niger is a major challenge to peacebuilding efforts. Due to persistent economic and security challenges, much of local civil society struggles to access the funding and technical training they need to implement impactful projects. This situation limits their ability to play an active role in peace initiatives, mediation and the strengthening of social cohesion. Investing in capacity building and resource mobilisation for local civil society is essential to support inclusive and sustainable approaches to peace.

The national government should consider:

- **Guarantee an open civic space:** Governments should implement legal and operational mechanisms to guarantee freedoms of participation in public affairs, speech, assembly, and association (both *de jure* and *de facto*). In addition, the government should provide safe spaces for



civil society input in all government processes, especially related to peace and security (e.g., through town halls and creation of working groups that are inclusive of civil society).

- **Remove administrative burden for obtaining funds by local civil society:** The government should simplify the procedures for and reduce costs of registering new organisations and obtaining approvals required for access to some multilateral grants.

The UN should consider:

- **Promoting national capacities to guarantee an open civic space:** The UNCT should work with national governments to increase their capacity to provide an open civic space and guarantee the freedoms of participation in public affairs, speech, assembly, and association.
- **Creating safe spaces:** The UNCT and RC Office could bring together the national government and local peacebuilders together in a risk-informed manner and encourage the creation of partnerships aimed at the common goals of peace.
- **Understanding the needs of local actors:** The RC Office should conduct a diagnosis/mapping of the financial and technical needs of civil society and other local actors and make this assessment available to relevant donors.
- **Making the UN funds more accessible for civil society:** The UNHQ should facilitate access to the Peacebuilding Fund and other UN funding for local organisations. At the field level, some good practices include not requiring a full proposal at first, but rather collecting stories and working with local organisations to unpack the story into a full proposal. Both formal and informal organisations should have the ability to access the UN funds.
- **Strengthening fundraising capacities of civil society:** The UN should develop practical programmes for strengthening the skills of youth and women in project management and monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL).

The donor community should consider:

- **Enhancing quality financing:** As discussed in the previous sections, the donor community should simplify the processes for accessing funding by local actors, prioritising long-term funding and making financial support more flexible, in line with [the principles of quality financing](#). The resources must be available to local actors of various sizes, both formal and informal. The investment in networks could be a way of channelling money to new and unregistered organisations.
- **Promoting localisation:** The donor funding priorities need to be guided by the needs within communities, rather than political priorities of the donor countries. [Authentic partnerships](#) between the donors and diverse national stakeholders can help balance interests. The co-creation with local communities is an essential part of impactful and relevant action.
- **Ensuring protection capacities of local civil society:** The donor community should further utilise emergency response funds, as well as ensure that there are protection allocations included in every grant to address urgent and unforeseeable protection needs of local civil society.

Other stakeholders should consider:

- *International non-governmental organisations (INGOs)* should provide administrative and technical support to assist local actors in preparing attractive projects for donors.